

129
The Two First
S E R M O N S

Preach'd to the
Congregation at *Hackney*,

After the D E A T H of the Reverend

Mr. B I L L I O,

And the Reverend

Mr. H E N R Y,
Their Two last P A S T O R S.

W I T H A

Prefatory Epistle to the Congregation.

By J. BA T E S, M. A.

L O N D O N:

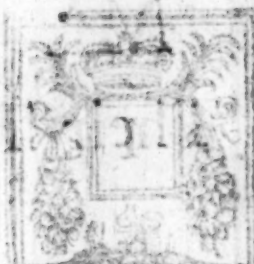
Printed for M. LAWRENCE, at the *Angel* in
the *Poultry*, and S. CLIFFE, at the
Bible and Three Crowns in *Cheapside*, 1714.

136



The Congregation at Hackney;
Grace and Reception God the FATHER
and from Our Lord Jesus CHRIST, &c

I feel it my duty, not that any
Circumstance is being accounted a
Temptation, for me to write to you, who
have converted long and freely amongst
young men who have preached the Word, and
administered all other Ordinances of our
Church, who have been your necessary Helpers, your
long associates, and your last Resort, as you well know,
in all your Experiences: Being honourably received in
your studies, being an inmate in several of your Families,
and during that the Kindness offered me was more;
as a desired Return to this your Respect, I have looked
upon it my Duty to be your honorary, or grateful Assistant,
as you pleased to call for me.



My Friends, have known me
of Love, and how much so ever it may
A 2



T O

The Congregation at *Hackney*;

Grace and Peace from GOD the FATHER;
and from Our Lord JESUS CHRIST, &c.

Honour'd and Beloved Friends,



Feel it no Difficulty, nor have any Cause to fear its being accounted a Trespass, for me to write to you; who have conversed long and freely amongst you; who have preached the Word; and administred all other Ordinances often to you; who have been your necessary Helper in your long Vacancies, and your last Resort; as you well know; in all your Exigencies: Being honourably received in your Houses, being an Inmate in several of your Families; and having had the Kindness offered me in more; as a deserved Return to this your Respect, I have looked upon it my Duty, to be your honourary, or gratified Assistant, as you pleased to call for me.

You, MY FRIENDS, have known my Labour of Love; and how weak so ever it was, You were
A 2 pleased

The Epistle to

pleased to accept it. I may say, I have been your Minister, I mean your officious Helper in CHRIST, GOD so ordering it; and the State of your affairs so requiring; by Necessity and by particular Events of Providence calling me to the Work, sometimes; and by your voluntary Calls, nay Importunities often: Tho' I never stood in the peculiar relation of a Stated Pastor to you, nor ever sought the Honour; not even now of late, when Solicitations might have seemed proper, and an Admission into the Number of your Candidates would have been easy, and was once and again offered.

I hope you'll pardon this Talkativeness, and allow me this Honour and Satisfaction to support me in mine unsettled State, and under my short Allowance as a Preacher of the Cross, to say, I have served you with a sincere intention to promote the Good and Edification of your Souls; as well as leave me to take the Comfort of expecting a Reward from our Gracious and Common LORD, at the equitable Day of Retribution.

Your Ministers, WORTHY FRIENDS, I'll do you the Justice to declare, have not wanted their DOUBLE HONOUR, that have laboured in the Word and Doctrine among you, in the Relation of Pastors; Nor I, the Gifts of your Love, who have been but your occasional Helper. You have shewed your Respects to 'em, while living and labouring in their LORD'S WORK, and when dead and received to Rest; by your Kindness to their Widows and Fatherless, as the World well knoweth. This Respect for the PROPHETS

the Congregation, &c.

OF THE LORD, hath gained you Praise in the Churches, and hath made it even Matter of Envy, to be such a Peoples Pastor, for the future.

YOU have been blessed with two faithful Pastors and Labourers, in the Time of my Abode amongst you: And now a Third is chosen. May the PLEASURE OF THE LORD prosper in his Hand; may he see of the Travel of his Soul and be satisfied; and may you go in and out under his Inspection and Direction, and find Pasture.

May Real, Powerful, Heart-purifying and Life-reforming Religion prevail in your Persons and Families: May Unity and Harmony, the Strength, Beauty and Glory of every Society, prevail in your Church and Congregation: And may all these prevail in your rich and extensive Village, for which and its kind Inhabitants, I shall always retain a Love. And as the best Interests, those of Piety, Peace, Civil Liberty and concern for the Rights of Mankind, even in the Worst of Times, have prevailed in it hitherto, may they continue to do so, as long as Man is upon the Earth.

My Friends of the Dissenting Congregation, if I may according to common Custom and Transgression, call you so, who live in so much Harmony with those of the ESTABLISHED CHURCH, and hold the same Principles in all Things with it, which our great and only LORD and Law-giver to the Church, JESUS CHRIST, hath thought worthy to be commanded as necessary

The Epistle to

sary Parts of Religion; not knowing how little Time, I may hereafter stay among you, I have taken this Opportunity to express my Gratitude to you all, and to the Place of my Abode, for near Fourteen Years. I do it with peculiar Pleasure and Delight to my Friends and their Families, that entertained me with them, and ministered to my Necessities. I cannot wish for better and greater Friends or Friendships. I would not make the expectation of the like, the Rule and Standard of Contentment in my future Condition. I heartily thank you, who have been moved of GOD to shew Kindness to me. And, I pray GOD, that none of you may fail of receiving a PROPHETS REWARD, and that GOD'S Goodness may extend it self not only to you, but to your Children, and Childrens Children.

I have always looked upon myself as under Special Obligation to pray for You and Yours, who have used me as Yourselves, given me the Freedom of Your Houses, and considered me as a Relation, rather than a common Friend. And as long as I am within the Hearing of Your State, the Prosperity of You and Yours, I can sensibly say, will be my Joy; and the Adversity of both, my Affliction.

I confess, I have been averse to many Ordinary Practices and Methods of increasing Friends and Benefactors, not only from the Retiredness of my Temper, and the Value I set upon Time; but likewise from the Sense of the Duty, which Favours multiplied, require

the Congregation, &c.

require of a Christian and a Minister. This Consideration renders the Friends I have found, particularly valuable to me. They have been the most voluntary Ones, and manifested the Propensity and habitual Goodness of their own Tempers.

I have taken the Liberty, my Friends of the Congregation, to present to Your View and Acceptance these Two Discourses, which were preached at Your Desire, and with Your Approbation. I know, I commit no Offence, by calling You to remember those and more, whom You love; whom You are hoping to follow to the Heavenly Mansions; and with whom, and the whole glorified Body of CHRIST, You are, I hope, daily preparing Yourselves to live for ever. GOD, by His frequent Removals of His Ministering Servants from You of late Years, hath certainly made it Your Duty to remember their Instructions, Example and Labour of Love. I now offer to You these small Helps and Excitements to it.

Tho' these SERMONS may be thought to come out too late for Strangers to Read, they cannot do so to You. One of them is a Piece of Respect, paid to the Memory of a Faithful LABOURER amongst You, and my FRIEND, who had no Funeral Discourse printed for him, a thing uncommon to Your Ministers; as well as to You: The other is a Discourse desired by some of You at this Time, as well as by others of my Friends, which I stand highly obliged to gratify. I would deserve Ill of no Man; nor give

The Epistle to, &c.

to any Occasion of Offence, either Real, or Supposed; and therefore would not be drawn to print either of these Discourses, in the properest Season; lest the doing of it should have been judged an Act of Disrespect to my Elder Brethren, whose Work it chiefly was to oblige the World this Way. If the Stranger that readeth these Discourses, find 'em less exact and full, I let him know, what You do, That they were composed hastily; one of them upon less than a Day's Notice. If any thing in either of 'em be judged rather too Moving, let Allowance be made for the over-bearing Affection of a Friend, and for the present Impressions of surprising Providences and Events, which are apt to work strongly. As to You, my FRIENDS, I, who have always loved Plainness, and allowed it, conclude, desiring You with the same Freedom to read them, that You did me, to study and preach 'em. And, if You'll please to do this Honour, pray accept 'em, as the grateful Remembrances of,

Your much obliged Friend,

who shall pray for the Health

and Prosperity of Your Souls,



J. BATES.

ly.
their
gagi
Imag
A
my
Pen
to be
exho
shew
Men
men

H E B. XIII. 7.

*Remember them which have the Rule over you *, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: Whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation.*



BEING deprived of the Presence of one Faithful Guide lately †, and of another not Eleven Years ago *, by the Hand of God, I shall desire it, in the Words of the Text, That rather their Memory, which is precious with you, than I, may preach to you at this Time. Faithful Ministers, being dead, still speak, to their surviving Flocks, especially. Their gracious Words must often occur to their Thoughts; their Integrity, Humility and pastoral Care, must often be engaging their Esteem; and they'll often be conversing with their Image, Example and excellent Qualities, for their good.

AND, let me observe to you, before I proceed further in my Discourse, These Words of my Text, falling from the Pen of such an one as *Paul*, the Aged, who by many is supposed to be the Author of this Epistle, and being inserted among the exhortations to Piety and Duty, which he gave to these *Hebrews*, shew us, how commendable a Quality this of Respect to the Memory of Faithful Ministers deceased, is, and how ornamental, not to say necessary to a Christian. As it is a Sin a-
B gainst

* Which are the Guides. † Mr. Billio. * Dr. Bates.

gainst Nature, to forget our Fathers after the Flesh ; so it is a Sin against Grace, to forget our Spiritual Fathers, or our Fathers in Christ : As it is ungrateful to forget the Dispensers of Carnal ; so it is likewise to forget the Dispensers of Spiritual Food. Forgetfulness of their incessant Labours, their seasonable Directions, their earnest Intercessions, their grave and instructive Examples, their comfortable Words, their Watchfulness and Sollicitude for the saving of Souls, &c. can scarcely dwell in any, except stony-Hearts and unprofitable Hearers.

INDEED, you have manifested your compliance already, in part, with this word of Exhortation, *Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, &c.* which I am calling you to hear, by your claiming the Honour and Charge of decently interring One of them, and by your generous Bounty to the Widow and Fatherless of the other : A Remembrance to the Families of both, beyond their Thoughts ; free, and unsought for, and therefore the rather entitling you to a Prophet's reward. My Text itself leads me, to take notice of this Token of the Sincerity of your Love : And, I have but just mentioned it, leaving it to be found to your Praise, at that Day, when you shall receive the Reward of well doing. I'll only apply those Words of Naomi to her Daughter-in-law, upon this Occasion. *Blessed be he (they) of the Lord, who have not left off their kindness to the Living, and to the Dead.* You have manifested your Compliance in part, I say, with this Text, by your Acts of kindness, already shewn to the Memories of your Ministers : Go on to perfect it, by that victorious Faith, Holiness and Hope, which it further requires, and which your deceased Pastors were once eminent Patterns of to you.

IN this Text and Exhortation of the Apostle, to shew Respect to the Memory of deceased Ministers, you may observe these Four Things ; upon which, with the Assistance of God, I shall insist.

I. THE Office and Honour which Ministers are called to, while they live, that of Rulers over the Flock, or Guides : *Remember them which have the Rule over you, or your Guides.*

II. THEIR Work and Employment, they are taken up with, in the exercise of this their Office, They speak unto their Flocks the Word of God, *Who have spoken unto you the Word of God.*

III. THE

III. THE Respect, which these believing *Hebrews*, and all other Christians as well as they, are called to shew them, after their decease; They are to remember them, and to imitate them in their Faith: *Remember them which are the Guides, &c. whose Faith follow, &c.*

IV. THE Motive which this Apostle directs these believing *Hebrews*, and all other Christians to have their Eye upon; to excite and encourage them to shew this Respect, towards their deceased Guides, *considering the End, &c.*

I. YOU may observe the Office and Honour, which Ministers are called to, while they live, that of *Rulers over the Flock or Guides*. *Remember them which have the Rule over you, ἡς ὑμεῖς ὑπακούετε.* This Word *ὑπακούετε*, tho' a Participle, had much better be Translated like a Noun, *your Rulers or Guides*, as it is translated *Matth. ii. 6.* Seeing the Apostle speaks here of Ministers that are deceased, and past any Thing of actual Rule, or Guidance. And here observe, Tho' the Word, as it is translated in the Text, seemeth to attribute a great deal of Power to Ministers, yet it must be modestly understood; lest we allow more to the Ministerial Office than becometh it: It is a Word of a large Interpretation, signifying any sort of Governors, any Persons in Office Authority and Eminency. It is not only attributed to Jesus Christ the King of Kings, to Governors of Provinces and Cities, to Judges and other Persons intrusted with Civil Jurisdiction in a Commonwealth; but likewise to Persons of eminency and skill in the Exercise of any Art, to Men of Note in any Society, to such as are Guides to others upon the Way, &c. And you'll find, it is translated in this last Sense in the Margin of your Bibles, both in the Text, and in verse 17. You read in the Margin of the Text, *Remember them which are the Guides*, instead of *Remember them which have the Rule over you*: And you read in the Margin of the 17th. v. *Obeys them that Guide, and submit yourselves*; instead of *obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves*. Not suggesting then to any of you, the least Cause from this Phrase, to think of Faithful Ministers, above what he ought to think, They are *Rulers or Guides* to the respective Flocks of Christ, to which they belong, and among whom they preach the Word of God. They guide their Minds, by the assistance and concurrence of the Spi-

rit of God, into all necessary and saving Truth, and guide their Feet into the way of Peace; thus preserving them from both Errors, and sinful Practices. They are in reality what the Apostle tells us, the conceited Jews were in pretence, *Rom. ii. Guides of the Blind, Lights of them which sit in Darkneſs, Inſtruments of the Fooliſh, and Teachers of Babes.* As Instruments in the Hand of Chriſt, they guide Souls out of the Myſtical *Egypt*, a ſtate of Sin and Darkneſs; they recover 'em from under the Power of the Myſtical *Pharaoh*, the Devil; and they conduct 'em through all the Difficulties and Dangers of the *Wilderneſs*, or of an evil World, ſafely; till they paſs through *Jordan*, and arrive in the true land of Promise, Heaven. All this they do, not as lording it imperiouſly over God's Heritage and People, but as being Enſamples to their Flocks; not as binding heavy Burthens with the *Phariſees* of Old, which themſelves will not move with one of their Fingers; but as preſſing the equitable Laws of the only Law-giver of the Church, Jeſus Chriſt, and ſubmitting to the ſame eaſy Yoke chearfully themſelves. They draw their Flocks along gently, and govern them as much, or more, by their Examples, oftentimes, then by their Words. As being Examples to their Flocks in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, Faith and Purity, they draw them to diſcourſe of Heavenly Things, to go about doing good, to love their Brethren, to be zealous for the beſt Gifts, to perſevere in the Faith, and to walk unſpotted through the World. The Faithful Miniſters of the Goſpel, convert Souls, and build them up in their moſt holy Faith: They encreaſe the Flock of Chriſt and feed it: They promote Edification and Order in it; and do all this, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre's ſake, but from a propenſity and ſtrong inclination of Mind to promote the Intereſt of Chriſt.

A Power, the Miniſters of Chriſt have allowed them, by the Laws of Chriſt; but it is not exerciſed by the Temporal Sword, nor of the ſame Nature with that of Civil Governors, as *Matt. xx. 25.* tells you: A gentle Authority they have delegated to them, by the Goſpel of Chriſt, within the Compaſs of the Precepts of which, it is limited; and ſo far as they go beyond this, ſo far they act beyond Chriſt's Miniſters: A Superintendency or Epiſcopacy they have; but 'tis a careful and ſollicitous one: An honourable Office they have; but 'tis a laborious one. Their Ordinary Titles, thoſe of Miniſters and Servants, Servants of their Flocks, as you read, *2 Cor. iv. 5.* ſeem to me,

ſcarcely

scarcely reconcilable with Civil Domination, Carnal Glory and Grandure. The greatest Ministers, according to the Rule *Jesus Christ* hath given us, wherewith to judge of the Matter, are those that are most Humble and Self-denying *Matt. xxiii. 11., 12.* *But he that is greatest among you, shall be your Servant, &c. He that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.* The best Ministers are those that express the Bowels of a Father, the Labour of an Husbandman, the Vigilancy of a Shepherd, and the Faithfulness of a Steward, in the Work of their Lord, and in the Guidance of his Church; those that are intent upon the Work, not the Profit and Honour of the Ministry.

AND such Guides and Superintendents, had these *Hebrews* enjoyed. They had sate under the Ministry of Apostles and Apostolick Men; Men that were almost miraculous in their Labours and Sufferings for the Churches Cause; as well as in their Gifts for the Churches Edification: Men that were not moved with Bonds and Afflictions, which every where waited for them; nor counted their own Lives dear to themselves, so that they might finish their Course with Joy, and the Ministry which they had received of the Lord *Jesus*, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God: Men that thirsted, not only to spread the Sayour of *Jesus Christ* in one City or Country, but thro' the whole World. These Christianized *Hebrews* had heard the Words, and seen the Exemplary Conversation of such Guides as the zealous *Peter*, the eloquent and fervent *Apollos*, the moderate and peaceable Spirited *James*, the Brother of our Lord, and of many others at *Jerusalem*, and elsewhere. They had rejoiced in the Light of Ministers, of warm Zeal, and of insinuating Eloquence; of Ministers that used a familiar Plainness, and of such as used a more exquisite Purity of Speech; of Ministers of one Perfection and another, to recommend 'em, according to the Gifts of God to each. But, do the Prophets live for ever? Do the Stars in *Christ's* Right Hand, shine for ever? No; Death cloudeth them after a while; and so it had done several of those, under whose Light and Influences these believing *Hebrews* had sate down comfortably, for a considerable Time.

AND thus it hath been with you that hear me; you have sitten under Ministers of various Gifts, in this Place, and elsewhere; but One and Another of 'em is dead. They have been your visible Guides, in the Flesh; but they are now so no more, no longer.

BUT

BUT, II. To proceed to the Second General Observation in the Text, the Work and Employment Ministers are engaged in, and taken up with, while they exercise this their Office of guiding the Churches of Christ, *viz. Speaking the Word of God.*

THIS had been the Work of the deceased Guides of these Hebrew Christians, while they lived, they had spoken to their Flocks the Word of God; and this is the Work of every Pastor of the Flock of Christ, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. *I charge ye (saith the Apostle Paul to Timothy) before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, preach the Word.* This is the chief Work of a Pastor, or Minister. *Christ sent me not (saith the same Apostle, 1 Cor. i. 17.) to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.* Good Rulers, (to comply for once, in my Way of Speaking, with the bolder Translation of my Text,) must publish to their Subjects, the Laws by which they govern them; and these are contained in the Word of God: Faithful Guides must carefully leave Directions with their Societies and Flocks, to govern themselves by, when they are not personally present with them, and visibly walking before them; such Directions as are grounded upon the Word of God.

IT is the Work of Memorable and Faithful Ministers of the Gospel, to speak to their respective Flocks *the Word of God*; the Word of God in its Purity, and in its Liberty.

(1) It is the Work of Memorable Ministers, while they live, to speak to their Flocks the Word of God in its Purity, or the very Word of God, the very Dictates and Revelations of his unerring Spirit, and what is consonant to these; not the Wisdom, Inventions, or Precepts of Men. The Apostle Paul, that faithful Guide of Souls, assured his Auditors, that what he taught 'em, was the genuine Word and Will of God; and indeed, those Preachers that do not give Evidence, that their Sermons are composed of the Word of God, and of what is agreeable to it, cannot expect to command much Reverence and Attention. Observe the Words of the Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. ii. 17. *We are not as many which corrupt the Word of God: but as of Sincerity, as of God, in the Sight of God, speak we in Christ.* Observe his Words, 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. *We speak Wisdom among them that are Perfect: Yet not the Wisdom of this World, nor of the Princes of this World, that come to nought: But we speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the*

World

World began. Observe his Words again, Gal. i. 11. *But I certify you, Brethren, that the Gospel which was preach'd by me, is not after Man. For I neither received it of Man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ.* Observe what the Apostle Peter speaks likewise, to the same Purpose, 2 Pet. i. 16. *For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you, the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* Ministers are Publishers of the Will of God, and the Doctrines which Christ came from Heaven to reveal; such as those of the universal Depravity of Mankind by their Fall, and of the Necessity of Faith in Christ, and Repentance towards God, in order to recover and save them; such as those of universal Purity and universal Charity; such as those of the constant Intercession of Christ above, and of the Necessity of the Assistance of his Spirit here below; such as those of the Conflagration of the World, of a Judgment to come, of eternal Joys for the Righteous, and eternal Torments for the Sinners, &c. The Ministers of Christ, are not Preachers of the *Wisdom of the World*, of Philosophy, profane History, the Mysteries of Trade, &c. They are not called to be Preachers of the *Wisdom of the Princes of this World*, or to be Preachers of Politicks, as the Apostle Paul hath just now told you. Our blessed Lord called them not to intermeddle with what is Civil, Secular, and belonging to the present Life; but to publish the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, and the Doctrines of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus; the Everlasting Gospel, and the Means of Eternal Salvation. Christ's faithful Ministers, must keep to their Master's Work, to the principal and eminent Part of it, *The Preaching of the Word of God.*

(2) It is the Work of Guides and Ministers of the Churches of Christ under the Gospel, while they are living, *to preach the Word of God, in its Liberty.* The Gospel is a Dispensation of noble Liberty, and Freedom from significant Rites, empty Shadows and positive Precepts; and those that are the most Orthodox, Faithful, and Genuine Preachers of it, publish it as such, and commend it to their Hearers in a Way becoming itself. The Apostle Paul would not circumcise Titus, a Greek, at Jerusalem; would not put him upon complying with that Shadow, Ceremony, and positive Institution, significative of putting off the Body, of the Sins of the Flesh; tho' his doing of it would have pleased the Jews, and taken off their Hatred against

gainst him ; for this great Reason, *That the Truth of the Gospel might continue with the Church of Christ, Gal. ii. 3, 4, 5.* This same Apostle rebuked his Fellow Apostle, *Peter*, for withdrawing from the *Gentiles*, as *Unclean*, with whom he had eaten, and familiarly conversed before ; lest some *Jews*, then present, should be offended at him, who came from *James* : And he rebuked him upon this Account, *because he walked not uprightly, according to the Truth of the Gospel*, which freed even those that were *Jews* by Nation, from all Precepts and Obligations to keep up such Distinctions, *Ver. 12, 14.* And Chap. v. 1. He exhorteth the *Galatian Christians*, to stand fast in the *Liberty* wherewith *Christ* had made them Free, and not to be entangled again with the *Yoke of Bondage*. He adds, *Ver. 13.* They had been called into *Liberty*. Those Ministers, that now urge a Number of significant Shadows and positive Precepts, together with the Word of God ; any at all, except such as *Baptism*, the *Lord's Supper*, and the *Laying on of Hands* in Ordination, they do no Honour, either to the Gospel ; or to their own Office, as Preachers of it. They add that which was the Imperfection and Infirmary of *Judaism*, to the Perfection of the Gospel : They intermix Darkness with Light, *Flesh* with Spirit, *Slavery* with Liberty, what is *Humane* with what is *Divine* ; and make way for a Spirit of Bondage, to the Elements of the World, where the free Spirit of Adoption should only take Place. It is the Work of those, that are Guides and Teachers under the Gospel, to preach the Gospel, becoming its own Nature, in its Simplicity, Purity, and Spirituality : It is the Work of those that are Teachers under the Gospel, to propagate the Gospel in all its Distinctions from, and in all its Advantages above *Judaism* ; to let it shine, and to promote its Shining forth in its genuine Lustre ; to make *Christ's Yoke* nothing heavier than it really is.

WELL, this is the Work of valuable and faithful Guides of the Church of *Christ*, to speak to their Hearers the Word of God, in its Purity, and in its Liberty ; nor to preach any thing foreign, or contrary to the Gospel ; nor to add any thing Imperfect, Shadowy, and Humane to it. And thus did your Guides act, which you have laid in the Dust ; thus honestly, thus ingenuously. What they had received from *Christ*, that they declared unto you ; not any thing foreign to it, to their Knowledge ; not any thing more, no Precepts of Men for Doctrines. They went before you in a Worship, in Spirit and in Truth ; they taught you a Doctrine that came from God. But now they

they are dead; the Eyes that see 'em, shall now see 'em no more; the Ears that heard 'em, shall now hear 'em no more, speaking in the Flesh; the Souls that were refreshed by their Administrations of Spiritual Food, shall feed no more at their Hands, nor Mouths. But, tho' they are dead, are these to be forgotten? No; *Remember them*, saith the Apostle.

III. LET me pass on therefore now, to the Third General Head, viz. The Respect which these believing *Hebrews*, and all other Christians besides them, ought to shew to such faithful Ministers, after they are deceased; they are to remember them, and imitate them in their Faith. *Remember your Guides, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow.*

IN the first Place, the Religious Flocks of Christ must remember their faithful Guides deceased. Even *Natural Love and Ingenuity* will incline a Society of Christians, frequently to call to Mind those that have demonstrated an Affection for them, those that have often spoken to 'em, and usefully conversed amongst them, while they were in this World. They cannot but retain an acceptable Idea of their Persons, but frequently reflect upon their amiable Perfections and Qualities. You'll find King *David* entertaining himself with pleasing Reflections upon the Memory of his deceased Friends, *Saul and Jonathan*. 2 Sam. i. 23. *Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their Lives, and in their Death they were not divided: They were swifter than Eagles, they were stronger than Lyons*, Ver. 26. *My Brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been to me.* The Dictates and Laws of Friendship too, will lead Men to remember their deceased Ministers, they have once taken Satisfaction in, done good to, and received good from, by shewing Kindness to their Relations and Family, &c. See the Workings of Holy *David's* Spirit, 2 Sam. ix. 1. *And David said, is there yet any that is left of the House of Saul, that I may shew him Kindness for Jonathan's Sake.* And the Grace of God, as well as the Dictates of Nature and Humanity, will incline Christians to remember their deceased Ministers and Spiritual Fathers, who have begotten them thro' the Gospel, and fed their Souls with the Bread of Life. The Grace of God will incline 'em to remember their Integrity, Vigilancy and Fidelity in their Office, and their Constancy and Indefatigableness in their Labours. *Remember* that by the space of three Years (saith the Apostle to the Christians

at Ephesus) I ceased not to warn every one of you Night and Day with Tears. The Grace of God will incline Men to remember their wise Maxims, and instructive Sayings, and to apply them upon Occasion. We find an instructive Saying of our Lord Jesus, the greatest of Preachers, which was preserved by some of his Hearers and Acquaintance, and quoted by the Apostle Paul, Acts xx. 35. *I have shewed you all Things, how that so labouring ye ought to instruct the Weak, and to remember the Words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give, than to receive. The Memory of the Just is blessed, saith the wise Man, Prov. x. 7.* Which Words the LXX render thus, *The Memory of the Just is with Encouragements or Praises.* Thus much we allowe to the Memory of those Labourers that have been faithful in Christ's Vineyard; thus much their People more especially owe to it, even to speak of em with Praises.

IN the second Place, the Flocks of Christ must imitate their deceased Guides in their Faith; *Whose Faith follow.* Remembrances of Natural Affection and Friendship; Remembrances by Way of Favour to their Families, by Way of Quotation of their Sentences and wise Sayings, by Way of Encomium and Praise of their Virtues, or by Way of inward Esteem of their Fidelity and Industry in their Charges and Cures, are not enough: Religious Flocks and Churches must remember their Pastor's Faith and holy Conduct, by way of Imitation.

THIS is the last Will of a good Minister, *What you have heard, and seen in me, consonant to the Laws of Christ, that do.* The greatest Honour, the greatest Pleasure you can do to good Ministers, that which they would most approve of, could they rise from the Dead, and come and speak again to you, is to endeavour to be like em, and to copy after their Excellencies and Graces, before a loose World. Be ye therefore Followers of them, so far as they were of Christ. Be not Slothful, but Followers of your Guides, who, thro' Faith and Patience, have inherited the Promises. Suffer good Shepherds to have a good Flock, to be found their Glory and Joy, and their Crown of Rejoycing, at the Great Day. See to it then, that none of you be lost, that none of you go away, John vi. 67. that none of you draw back unto Perdition; but that all of you believe unto the saving of your Souls. Be ye Followers together of them, and mark those amongst you which walk so, as ye have had them for an Example: For their Conversation was in Heaven.

(1st,) THEY

(1st), **THEY** set before you, and taught you Faith in its Purity, as you have heard, the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints; the Doctrines of God, without adding the Commandments of Men; the great Foundation, *Jesus Christ*, without any light and perishing Superstructure of Hay and Stubble. You see in them Divine Truth, held forth in its Native Beauty; Divine Worship, perform'd in its Primitive Simplicity; and a Divine Temper of Peaceableness and Charity adorning their whole Lives. They were swasive, not imposing Guides; they affected to be Ministers, not Lords or Masters; they fed you willingly, not by Constraint; they strove to lay nothing upon you but the Yoke of *Christ*; they required nothing but necessary Things. Follow therefore the Faith these taught, and the Faith by which they lived. Adhere to the same Liberty and Purity of the Gospel, which they preached and pressed. Cover earnestly that Truth, that Order, that Government in the Church, which hath the plainest Signatures of Divine Authority upon it. *Ye are bought with a Price, be not ye the Servants of Men.* Aim at commending yourselves to God in Religion, not at commending yourselves to the World. Let what is Heavenly, Spiritual, and certainly Divine, draw you; not what is Earthly, Carnal, and confessedly Humane. It is better to be despised with *Christ*, and for keeping up a strict Conformity to his Institutions, than to Reign with the World.

(2dly), **THEY**, I mean your deceased Guides, set before you, and were Examples to you, of Faith in its Efficacy too. By *Works Faith is made Perfect*, *Jam. ii. 22.* And theirs receiv'd its Perfection. It worked by Love towards God, and by Candor, Temper, Condescension and Charity towards Men. It overcame the Frowns and Discouragements of the World, it purified their Hearts, and was a fruitful Principle of Holiness in their Lives: It enabled them to look for the blessed Hope, and by Patience to wait for it.

SUCH a Profession of Faith as this, your deceased Pastors held fast; in such a Faith as this they died: Such an one therefore, is now commended to your Imitation. Follow your Guides,

IV. I come now to the Fourth and Last General, observed in the Words, *viz.* The Motive which this Apostle directs these

believing *Hebrews*, and all other Christians to have their Eye upon, for the Excitation and Encouragement of themselves to follow the Faith of their deceased Guides; and this is the Consideration of their *Exits*, or of the *Conclusion and End of their Conversation*.

THEY must consider, he tells 'em, *once and again, ἀνα- (ἀναστροφῆς)*, the last End of their Guides; how comfortably they left the World, how full of Peace, and with what Assurances of Hope: They must consider with what Easiness they put off the Body, and with what strong Confidence they cast their Souls into the Arms of God. Some of their Guides died Martyrs for Christianity, such as *James*, the Son of *Alpheus*; others died a Natural Death: But all rejoiced in Hope of the Glory of God; all blessed God for *Jesus Christ*, and for the Grace revealed by his Gospel. All looked upon Death as a conquer'd Enemy, unable to hurt 'em or separate 'em from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus; so far unable to separate them, &c. that it was the direct Way to a State of the most intimate Union with God and Christ. So fervent a Love to Christ many of the Primitive Preachers of him had, that they longed to be dissolved, and to be with him, as what was best of all for them. Their Love to him triumphed over all their Fears of Death. Their Faith enabled them even to slight that King of Terrors, which held the unbelieving World in Bondage. The Apostle knew that the frequent Consideration, the Viewing and Reviewing (as the Original Word *ἀναθεωρεῖς* importeth) of their good Ministers comfortable End, must excite these *Hebrews* to follow their Faith. Their Thoughts of their serene, composed and joyous Death, would make 'em in Love with their Manner of Life. A dying Saint or Minister, full of Expressions of Faith and Resignation to God, is an Example that even forceth Admiration and Imitation. Observe those Words of the Evangelist *Luke*, Chap. xxiii. 46, 47. *And when Jesus had cried with a loud Voice, he said, Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the Ghost. And when the Centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a Righteous Man.*

NOW, my Brethren, considering the End of your departed Pastors Conversations, and the happy Conclusion of their Lives in Peace and Comfort, which they experienced themselves; tho' the Providence of God hindered you of the Advan-

tage of being so much acquainted with it, as you desired; raking one away suddenly, and the other by a dangerous and violent Distemper: I say, considering the blessed Conclusion of your Ministers Lives; *for they are blessed eternally that die in the Lord*, hold fast the faithful Words these have taught you; imitate their Faith, and prepare industriously to be found in Peace at the coming of your Lord, to call you out of the World after them.

I'LL now conclude my Discourse upon this Text and Subject, with Three or Four serious Observations or Remarks.

(1.) ALL Persons in this World are Mortal, and have but their Day: Ecclesiastical Persons, as well as Civil; those that have a peculiar Honour and Office in the Church of Christ, as well as those that are private Members of it. Those Words of Job, Chap. xiv. 5, 6. are observable, *Seeing Mans Days are determined, and the Number of his Months are with thee, thou hast appointed his Bounds, that he cannot pass. Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an Hireling, his Day.* The Prophets, the Men of Inspiration, the most illustriously gifted of Gods Ministers, *Do these live for ever?* Where are the Apostles and Apostolick Men? They are dead and gone? God hath bestowed upon none of his Messengers, whether of greater or lesser Accomplishments and degrees of Uction, the Gift of Immortality. The clearest Lights, and brightest Stars of the Church, fall from their Orbs into the Dust: Those who speak Words of Life to others, Words of Eternal Life, die themselves. The thundering Boanerges's, the eloquent Apollons, are soon silenced. Ministers have their Treasure of Gifts and Graces in Earthen Vessels, which are easily, and often suddenly broken. Men cannot glory in, they cannot promise themselves a long Enjoyment of the most experienced Ministers, the best furnished Scribes for the Kingdom of Heaven. Their Word, and the sanctifying and saving Influences of it, endure for ever, but they themselves die. *For all Flesh is as Grass, and all the Glory of Man as the Flower of Grass: The Grass withereth, and the Flower thereof falleth away. But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.* 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

(2.) ALL Societies that subsist in this World, experience their Breaches, and have their Dead to remember. Not only Civil, but sacred Societies lose their Guides. Kingdoms, Churches,

Churches, Families, lose their Superintendants and Directors. Their State is Mutable, they are constantly a losing some of their constituent Parts, and often some of their Principal ones. The Question of the Sons of the Prophets to *Elisba*, may frequently and pertinently be asked one and another Member of these changeable earthly Societies, *Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy Head to Day?* thy Prince, thy Governour, thy Minister, thy Father, thy Husband? Even Churches, I say, which are so many Nurseries for an Eternal Society and Kingdom; even Churches, which are the Door into an Immortal Society and Kingdom; even Churches, those Societies in which the Spirit of Life operates, in which the Words of Eternal Life are spoken, experience their Breaches, While they are settled and remain in this World, Death is constantly removing, both their Guides and their Members. They enjoy no Pastor that always lives, except Jesus Christ, who is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever. Every Church that hath been settled for any Term of Time, hath its Deceased and Departed to remember.

THUS it is, with holy Societies and Churches, while they subsist in this World, and thus Mortal they are. But it is not so with the Church Triumphant, the Assembly of the Just above. There is no more Death; there are no more Breaches. Christians never lose their Acquaintance there, never have been separated from them by Death; such former Things or Afflictions, are passed away. If Separation then, from Relations and Christian Friends, be so very afflictive to us; how happy are those, that are already join'd to that Immortal Society and City of God, above?

YOU may comfort yourselves then, concerning your Dead. They have as much Reason to rejoyce, as you have to lament. You lament, some of you, because you have lost your Minister, Friend, and Relation: And your Minister, Friend, and Relation rejoyceth, because he can now lose nothing, no Friend nor Favourite any more.

(3.) OBSERVE, God hath his Expectations from Christian Societies and Churches, upon the Account of deceased Ministers, as well as upon the Account of those that are still living. — He reckoneth, how many Ministers and Messengers he hath sent to a People: He taketh Notice, how watchfully those

have

have presided over Souls, and guided them; how diligently and unweariedly they have laboured among them; what bright Examples of Holiness they have set them; how usefully they have lived, and in the Exercise of what Faith, Hope, and Resignation they have died, in order to engage their Flock to love Religion. And he expects, there should be found an Improvement in Knowledge, Faith and Holiness among 'em, suitable to the Life and Labours of their Pastors. God considereth, that such Churches have enjoyed Ministers of such and such Eminency in Gifts; Ministers of great Eloquence, and Ministers of convincing Plainness: Ministers of clear Heads, and Ministers of warm Hearts; Ministers sound in the Faith, and extensive in their Charity; Ministers of peaceable Spirits, and of pure Lives: And he expecteth these Churches should be Societies of eminent Christians. And if he finds that they are not, he is angry, and hath prepared his Judgments.

YOU that hear me this Day, have enjoyed variety of eminent Guides, here and elsewhere, and have experienced their Pastoral Care, and their more abundant Labours. You have been fed in fat Pastures; you have had the best of Meat given you in due Season. It will be more tolerable for any other Sinners whatsoever, in the Day of Judgment, than for those among you, who have despised the Exhortations of so many wise Men and Prophets. How many Sermons, Prayers and Tears, have the unprofitable Hearers under your Means of Grace, recorded in the Book of God's Remembrance, to serve for Testimonies against 'em, at the Great Day of Judging the World?

LET me ask the Unprofitable Hearers of such an Assembly as this, the Strangers to the Power of Godliness, How many faithful Ministers must spend their Lives and Strength, in persuading and directing them to be Holy and Happy forever, and yet they will not mind them? How many Lives must be spent in the Cause of your Reformation and Salvation, and yet you will not be reformed and saved? How many Memorials of eminent Ministers departed, who preached the Faith to you, and walked according to it, must you have, before you'll give up yourselves to be the Lord's People, and separate yourselves from the Corruptions of the World and the Flesh? Poor unprofitable Creatures! Remember it, People are not Immortal, no more than their Ministers. And what will you do for Hope and Comfort, when you come to die, if neither one Minister

nor

nor another can persuade you to repent and reform, but must still, as they have done, spend their Strength for nought, and their Life and Labours unsuccessfully upon you?

(4.) **OBSERVE**, the peaceable and comfortable Death of a Minister, is a powerful and lasting Commendation to his Hearers or People, of his Doctrine and Exemplary Life. The Death carrieth Ministers into the *Land of Darknes and Forgetfulness*, as well as other Men; yet the Manner of their Death, and the State in which they die, oftentimes revives, and tendereth to preach over again, as it were, all that they have taught in their Life time. How doth it commend a Minister's holy Life and Doctrine, to see God smiling upon him at Death, bearing him up above its Fears, and enabling him to go triumphantly thro' that dark Valley? How doth it endear a pious Minister's Memory to his destitute Flock, when he Expires, comforting and encouraging them, with the same Comforts wherewith he hath been, and is then comforted himself of God?

I now leave a plain-hearted, humble, peaceable, chearful, friendly and industrious Minister, not to be forgotten by you, and blotted out of your Memories; but to be remembered and imitated in his Faith, Spirit, and Manner of Life. I should say more, were it not, that I study to pay a just Deference to one of greater Age, Abilities and Usefulness*, who is to speak to you in the Afternoon; whose Province I would not seem to invade, by attempting to give a larger Character of the Deceased. I repeat it again, and conclude with it. Remember him, and other faithful Servants of Christ, *who have spoken unto you the Word of God: Whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation.*

* Mr. Shower.

FINIS.



Printed for M. B. at the
the Bow-church
Bible and T...

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd

At *Hackney*, *June* the 27th. 1714.

Being the

First LORD'S-DAY

After the REVEREND

Mr. H E N R Y's

Suddain Death in the Country.

By J. B A T E S, M. A.

L O N D O N:

Printed for M. LAWRENCE, at the *Angel* in
the *Poultry*, and S. CLIFFE, at the
Bible and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapside*, 1714.

ST. JEROME

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

THE HISTORY OF THE

If

C

Alas
now
in th

T
poun
ent
with
rea
ona
est
ause
Vor
ov'd
Fear
rom
Dep
our l
over
vea
vid
ide

JOHN XIV. 28.

*If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce,
because I said, I go unto the Fa-
ther.*

CH R I S T's Flock, his little and weak Flock, were now a going to lose the Society and Prefence in the Flesh of the best of Pastors, and to live in a depriv'd Condition, (which, alas! is Yours at present,) for a Time. *Ye have heard, now I said unto you, I go away,* saith our Lord to them, in the Words before the Text.

TH I S Flock lov'd their Pastor, as you have done ours, and fell to sorrowful Reflections upon their present Case and Circumstances, as being about to part with Him; with Him, who was the most edifying Teacher, the most perfect Example, the most compassionate Councillor, the most faithful Reprover, and the best Friend and Guide to Heaven. *Chap. xvi. 6. But because I have said these Things to you, i. e. spoke these Words, I go away, Sorrow bath filled your Hearts.* They lov'd their Pastor, I say, and fell into Sorrow and Tears under the Sense of his approaching Separation from them. Sighs and Tears for the Departing, or the Departed, are Evidences of Love: You'll find, when our Lord groan'd in Spirit, and was troubled, and wept over Lazarus's Grave, the *Jews said, Behold, how he loved him;* chap. xi. 33, 34, 35. Sighs, Tears, &c. are Evidences of Affection which tender Natures easily slide into, indulge themselves in, and express their Con-

cern by, even to a degree of blameable Weakness oftentimes, before they recover themselves.

BUT what doth our Blessed Lord now say, to his Sorrowing Disciples, to cheer their Hearts, and to compose and regulate their Spirits and Passions, under the Sense of this his Departure? He tells them, as in the Words of the Text, *That if they loved him, they would rejoyce.* If they loved him, *Him*, (observe the Word) and not *themselves* only, or chiefly; If they lov'd his Rest, his Glory, his going to be crown'd, rewarded and perfected, as well as, or as much as they lov'd their own Happiness, arising from seeing his Face in the Flesh, hearing his Voice, and receiving his Instructions and Consolations, they would rejoyce at his Departure: If they lov'd Him Rationally and with Discretion, then considering Him as One that had been an obedient Son to GOD, always delighting to do his Will, they would rejoyce at his going away from them, to GOD, to receive his Reward and Inheritance. They would rejoyce, he tells them, and with good Ground and Foundation, because he had said to them, *He went to the Father, i. e. to GOD*, who stood in the Relation of a Father to him, in a principal and peculiar manner: They would rejoyce at his going away, because he went to One that would be kind to him, as well as enable him to be kind to them; to One that could not but be dear and desirable to him, even dearer than he was to them, how much soever they might think that they lov'd him; to One that was greater than himself, as he speaks in the Words following the Text. *For my Father is greater than I, i. e.* He is so in Power, Glory, Blessedness, and Riches of Grace to Sinners, considering me as a Mediator. These Disciples could not but conclude, from what their Lord had said to them, if they considered it, That this his Departure from them, would certainly be Comfortable and Glorious to him,

as

as well as Advantageous to them, in the Issue. And could not their Selfishness afford, that he should be happy? Could they not recede from their Desire of their Pastor's Presence with them, for his own Good? Could they profess rational Love to him, and yet not let him go from an evil World, to a good one? From hard Labours, to Rest? From the Society of persecuting Enemies, into the Arms and Embraces of a Father? Would nothing satisfy them, but Christ's staying always, or a long Time at least, in this evil World, to serve and comfort them? O uneasy Love to Christ! O unfriendly Affection in these his Flock! It is the Part of true Friends to consent to that which is most for the Interest of those they love, and to deny themselves for their Advantage. But, Alas! so weak were the Disciples of Christ at this Time, and so disturb'd at the Thoughts of being left without his Presence in the Flesh, which had been highly pleasing and useful to them, that they could not come up to this Rule and Duty of Friendship, and rejoyce at his going from them to his Father and best Friend.

IN the following Discourse upon these Words, thus open'd to you, I shall rake Notice of these Three Things, and insist a little upon them.

I. Of the great Friend and Patron to whom faithful Pastors retire, when they leave this World, and their respective Flocks in it: They go to the Father; to GOD the Father of All, and their Gracious Father.

II. OF the Infirmities, Passions, and natural Weaknesses, which the Flocks and Disciples of such Pastors are prone to discover, upon their leaving the World and them, and which they are apt to indulge themselves in, as Testimonies and Evidences of their Love towards them.

them. They are prone to heaviness of Spirit, Sorrow and Tears.

III. OF the rational Love, which the Flocks of Faithful Pastors ought to shew, which Christ would have had his own Flock to have shewn, and which all departed Pastors of the like Spirit, Faith, and Hope, would call theirs to shew, upon such Events or Occasions, could they come and speak to them. The rational Love, which the Flocks of Faithful Pastors, ought to shew towards such Pastors, upon their leaving this World, is Joy and Rejoycing; upon this Account, *that they go to the Father. If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, because I said, 'I go unto the Father.*

To enter upon the FIRST of these, The great Friend, to whom faithfull Pastors and Teachers of the Will of GOD retire, when they leave the World, and their respective Flocks in it. *They go to the Father.*

JESUS CHRIST went to the Father: He, the chief Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, went thither, when he left the World. And all inferior Shepherds that are his Faithful Imitators, follow him thither, and walk with him *in White*, or in Princely Ornature, as being found *worthy* and acceptable to his Father and him. In his Father's House there are many Mansions; and he hath encouraged his Disciples with the notice, that he is gone before them, to prepare a Place for them. This is a comfortable Journey which Faithful Pastors, and their Faithful People too, make, at their taking their Leave of this Earth. Where-ever they are, and whatever they are a doing, when they take this last Journey towards their Father, it proveth an happy one: Whether Travelling abroad, or Sitting at home; Whether discoursing with distant Friends, and confirming and comforting them; or conversing with

with their nearest Neighbours. It is a comfortable Journey, whether they travel it Post, or go it slowly; whether they are set at Liberty to go it, by the quick dispatch of a sudden Disease, or by a slow-working one; whether by an Apoplexy, a Convulsion, or a lingering Consumption. At whatever Hour they are called to be gone, at Evening, Midnight, or at the Cock-crowing, or in the Morning, they are happy. Their Father hath his Arms open to receive them, and his Mouth open too to tell them, That all he hath, is theirs; his Kingdom, his Consolations, his Glory, and what not: And, they have their Hearts and Desires open and enlarged, to go to him, and drink of the Rivers of his Pleasures for evermore.

OUR LORD told his Disciples, He went to his Father and their Father, to his GOD and their GOD: And in due Time, all his Elect go after him, to experience the Bowels and Mercies of this their promised, and fore-noticed Father, who can make up the Losses of all his dutiful Children, and compensate for all the dear Relations they have left behind them, for a little while longer here on Earth. Tho' Christ's Disciples and Ministers leave a Family behind them, their Heavenly Father compensates this Loss, by putting them into his Family in Heaven, his perfect, pure, and spotless One: Tho' they leave a Wife and Children, they go where they make up a Part of the Society of *the Bride, the Lamb's Wife*, in her most Glorious Condition; and where they enjoy the Company of the general Assembly of the *First-born*: Tho' they leave Spiritual Children, their afflicted Flocks on Earth, they go, if they have been useful Ministers, as yours hath been, to the Comfortable Society of those departed Saints, to whom GOD hath made them Spiritual Fathers, and rejoyce with them in their Joy, and share with them in their Glory,

FAITHFUL

FAITHFUL Pastors go to the Father, to GOD, who is the Father, and their Father in particular. A Comfortable Word! This is a Comfortable Title, under which GOD is set forth as ready to receive the Faithful followers of his Son Jesus Christ, as well as Jesus Christ himself. *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father,* John xx. 17.

1. THIS Title holdeth forth GOD to us, as One that is loving and affectionate in his Temper. A Father without love is abominated, and reckoned a Brute, or a Monster, even among Men that are evil. And, can we think then, that GOD, the All-perfect and Spotless GOD, wanteth Love? Or falleth under such a scandalous defect? No, no: As he is set forth to his Creatures, as a Father: So he hath the Affections, Tenderneſs and Bowels that become One that standeth in ſuch a Relation. And, if Love, powerful Love, with all the Expreſſions and Maniſtations of it, can make thoſe that live, labour, and die in the LORD, happy; ſuch as do ſo, muſt be happy, when they are got to GOD. GOD will love them better than they love themſelves: He'll make them ſtand amazed at his Love. They ſhall find thoſe Words of Chriſt true to the uttermoſt, when once got home to him, *Joh. xvi. 17. My Father himſelf loveth you.*

2. THIS Title ſetteth forth GOD to us, as One from whom, thoſe that go to dwell with him, may expect all good Gifts, *Matth. vii. 9. Or what Man is there of you, whom if his Son ask Bread, will he give him a Stone? v. 11. If ye then being Evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children, How much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven, give good Gifts to his Children?* Now, if our Heavenly Father, is a Father of Gifts, and One freer to his People, than other Fathers are to their Children,

Children, even while they are in this World; What will He be to them, when they are gone to dwell in his Presence in Heaven? They shall certainly inherit all Things there: By his universal, unconfined, perfect Bounty, He will shew himself to be their Father, and they shall appear to be his Sons, *Rev. xxi. 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all Things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.*

3. To add no more, This Title *Father*, setteth forth GOD, as One that must be lovely, acceptable and delightful, to all those that go out of the World to him, to dwell with him for ever. GOD the Father, to whom every good Shepherd under Christ, and all the Sheep of Christ go, for their eternal Rest and Rewards, is One, in whom they can take the utmost Pleasure, as well as One, who can take Pleasure in them; is One whom they can love, as well as One who loveth them; is One they cannot but praise, attribute Glory to, and fall down before, with Admiration, as well as One who will cloath them with Glory. Whoever goeth to GOD, goeth to One that he cannot but be enamoured with, and give eternal Praises to. There is that Beauty and Loveliness in his Nature and Temper, which will always inspire those that dwell in his Presence, with a Spirit of Rapture and Joy. Blessed are they that dwell in GOD's Heavenly House and Temple; they shall be *still*, they shall be *ever* praising Him.

WHAT must I say? To go to the Father, or to go to GOD, who is the Father of all Faithful Pastors, and of their Faithful People too, is Privilege enough. This Sentence connoteth and intimateth Happiness enough, if any can. It is expressive of more than our Eyes have seen, or our Ears heard of. It is to go to a Friend and Patron, who is an everlasting King, who

hath an everlasting Kingdom, everlasting Riches, Glory, Life, Joy, Peace, and every Thing: And, what is yet better, it is to go to One, who is communicative of all these, to those that go to dwell with him. Well might our LORD JESUS then, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, say to his Disciples and Flock, *If they loved him, they would rejoyce*; rejoyce at his going out of the World; because he went to the Father; And well may I turn the Text upon you that are Sorrowing for a Faithful Pastor, One subordinate to this great Shepherd, and that walked in his Steps, *If ye loved him, ye would rejoyce, because he is gone to the Father.*

BUT I proceed now to the SECOND Thing observable in the Text, or at least from the Tempers of his Disciples and Flock, when he spoke the Words of it to them, (*viz.*) The Infirmities and Weaknesses which the Flocks of Faithful Pastors are prone to discover, and to indulge themselves in, as Expressions and Evidences of Love to them, upon their leaving the World, and going to this great Patron and Friend, *the Father.* They are prone to give themselves up, and abandon themselves to Sorrow and Tears.

YOU may suppose, the Tears stood in the Eyes of Christ's Disciples, his little Flock, at this Time when he spoke these Words of the Text to them: You may suppose, their Hearts were heavy; that they struck upon their Thighs; that they cried out, what shall we do? what will become of us, when we are thus deprived? and that they gave forth many such outward Evidences, as these, of their Sorrow and Concern, at the Notices of Christ their Pastor's going out of the World, to his GOD and Heavenly Father. There was somewhat, yea, a great deal of this; or Christ would not have blamed their present afflicted Temper, which they gave way to. Read *chap. xvi. 5, 6.* and you'll

you'll find, They were so full of Sorrow, that they could not speak to him; nor scarce tell what he spoke to them, for Astonishment. Even forward and talkative Peter, was struck dumb, we may suppose; for we hear not of his opening his Mouth at this Time. Read the fore-quoted Place, *But now I go away to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whether goest thou? But because I have said these Things, Sorrow hath filled your Hearts.* As soon as these dejected Disciples of Christ, could so far throw off their Disturbance, about this Time, as to exercise calm Consideration, we may believe, their Minds work'd this way; They remembered the continued and comfortable Society they had enjoyed with this their Pastor and Master, for about Three Years together; the free Admission he gave them always to him, for the Resolution of their Doubts; the familiar and useful Instructions that daily drop'd from him, for their Edification and Establishment; the Care he took of them, the Miracles he wrought before them, the Prayers he put up for them, &c.

WE may believe, they remembered, how they had left all for him; how they had constantly appeared with him in the Face of a Persecuting World; and what enmity the Jewish Doctors and Rulers had expressed against him, and against them too, for following him. And, we may suppose, they now began to think, all this would fall directly and solely upon themselves, who as yet, were very unfit to grapple with it, and bear it: They having none of that Wisdom which dwelt in this their Master, to Answer their entangling Questions; no such Power as assisted him, to work Miracles for the Countenancing of the Doctrines they had imbibed from him; nor such universal Goodness as shined forth in him, wherewith to engage all, where-ever they came, by doing them kind Offices. We may believe, that they thought of

such Losses, Inconveniencies and Difficulties as these, as what were now a befalling them, from Christ's Departure from them; and wept, and sigh'd at them, without being able, as yet, to cheer their Hearts and raise their Spirits, by any of the good Words of Promise, which he had spoken to them. Sadness and Affliction, and that only, prevailed in them, at the Thoughts of his going away from them, which would, as they judged, bring all these Evils upon them.

THEY shewed their Love to their LORD, by weeping and sighing at the Thoughts of his Departure from them to Heaven, and at the Thoughts of the Consequences of it to them: Or rather, they shewed their Love to themselves, this way: For in Reality, they shewed more Love to themselves, than to him.

WEeping and sighing at the Thoughts of the Removal of a good Pastor to Heaven, doth shew forth some Love indeed: These are Evidences of Love which our Infirm Natures easily discover and abound in. But then, as I have said, there is a mixture of Self in this Love; there are great marks of Imperfection upon it: And we should shew forth greater, higher, more rational, exalted, and refined Love, at the Removal of such to GOD, if we could rejoyce at the Thoughts of their Happiness with him, and raise our Minds to expatiate upon their Eternal Pleasures, till we even felt ourselves happy in their Happiness.

BUT alas! Humane Nature is weak, and we can but rise to a little height generally, in Love to departing and departed Saints; if they are our Friends, if they are related to us, and do us Good. There is much of *Selfishness*, I have confess'd, in it; but yet it is of a pardonable Selfishness comparatively. We would hold good Men, good Pastors, and other useful Servants of
GOD,

these, s De- hem, s and Pro- d Af- the ould, o, by rture f the ewed ality, m. GOD, if we could, still longer with us, for our Edifi- ation and Advantage, as the Disciples of Christ would their Master; tho' GOD calleth them away. We would gladly keep them with us, yet the other term of Time; tho' we keep them out of Heaven, and from their Fa- ther. We say, *Not so Lord*; when GOD calleth them to come presently and suddenly. Christ knew, that Humane Nature was thus infirm. Perhaps he felt some- what of its Propensities this way, strongly working in himself, when he wept at *Lazarus's* Grave. Christ knew, I say it again, that thus infirm Humane Nature was, notwithstanding its reception of the Grace of GOD in some Degree: And therefore he did not bear hard upon his Disciples, nor blame them very sharply, when they sorrow'd at this Time, at the Notice of his going from them to Heaven *.

THE Truth is, such is the Infirmary of the honest- est Souls generally, in this World, that they cannot without Difficulty, get above Weeping and Sighs, for the departure of good Men, of good Ministers especial- ly, who they firmly believe are gone to Glory, upon their own Account; upon the Account of the sweet Coun- sel they took with them; the good Exhortations they receiv'd from them, and the refreshing Consolations which drop'd from their Mouths. But setting aside the Consideration

* Neque suos prosequi luctu Christianis interdictum est. quo- rum fortitudo non eo spectat, ut illos ferreos aut saxeos reddat, sed fides quam è Scripturis didicerunt, mortem peccati pœnam & supplicium esse docet unde sensus & iræ Dei admonet, & Pecca- tum magis magisque horribile ac detestandum prædicat. Plorabant in Evangelio duæ Sorores Lazari, quamvis neutra earum ignora- ret, illum extremo saltem judicij die à mortuis excitandum. Flet- bat & Christus, qui tamen probe noverat quomodo ad vitam quam ante quatuor dies deseruerat, esset illum revocaturus. Paulus item quem non latebat, Compendium esse mori, & lucu lento magno- que lucro deputandum esse ut hinc ad Christum solvatur. Pet- ri part Epist ad viduam D. Mart. Bucer.

Consideration of private Losses ; as such good Men and Ministers are a publick Loss to the World, the Church of GOD, the Kingdom to which they belong'd, the Congregations to which they were immediately related, and to others to whom they preach'd with Acceptation and Success, it well becometh the greatest and most perfect Christians, to lament their Departure, and they shew a Christian Spirit in so doing. Both Ministers and People may well lament the Loss of our deceased Friend, and *your worthy Pastor*, upon these Accounts. Let me speak, with many more who can heartily do it, the Words of *David*, concerning his worthy Friend, and that amiable Soul, *Jonathan*, *2 Sam. i. 16* *I am distressed for thee, my Brother.*

BUT I cease to encourage Sorrow, where it already prevaieth : I would not quite melt down and overwhelm affected and afflicted Hearts.— Let us proceed to the Third Thing observable from the Words.

III. WE may observe the rational Evidences of Love which the Flocks of Faithful Pastors ought to shew towards such Pastors, upon their leaving the World. They ought to rejoyce, because they go unto the Father. *If ye loved me*, saith Christ to his Flock, *ye would shew your Love this way, Ye would rejoyce, because I said, I go unto the Father.*

THE Flocks of Faithful Pastors ought to forget themselves in a just and honourable Measure, to lay aside the Sense of their own Necessities and desirable Satisfaction, and to be concern'd about those of their departed Friend and spiritual Father. They ought not to mourn over their own private Loss, ungenerously and unkindly ; but to rejoyce and take pleasure in the Departed's Gain. It becometh them, not to keep on Earth, poring upon what they themselves have parted with

with ; but to mount above, and view what their Friend
in the LORD hath gain'd. They should rejoyce, That
weary Labourer, is got to Rest ; That One in La-
bours more abundant, hath received his Reward ; That
One that often comforted them, is comforted himself ;
That One that pray'd for them, is now Praising ; That
that Tongue which preach'd so often the Doctrine of
the Lamb, is now singing the Song of the Lamb. —
Both they ought to rejoyce, That One that led them to
know GOD, is now enjoying Him ; That One who led
them carefully thro' the Wilderness, towards it, is now
got into the Possession of the Heavenly *Canaan* him-
self ; That One that sow'd in Tears, and wept for
them, hath now all Tears wip'd away from his Eyes ;
That One who liv'd among Strangers and Enemies, is
now got home to his Father's House ; That two such
Friends are happily met together, as a loving and kind
Father, and a loving and dutiful Son.

WOULD not a common Hireling reckon you un-
d, and even base-spirited, if you were displeas'd at
receiving his Reward, as soon as his Master is wil-
ling to give it him ? And is it not unkind then in you,
may it not justly be reckon'd so, to be disturb'd and
Hicted, that your worthy Pastor and Labourer in the
Work of the LORD, is call'd by his Gracious Master to
ceive his Reward, sooner than you expected, or than
many others do. Forget yourselves, and your own
Wills and Interests a little, and be considerate. Would
you have GOD's Sons and Servants stay longer in a ba-
nished and distant Estate, than GOD seeth fit ? Would
you have 'em put to endure more Labours, more
sufferings, Toils, Trials, than are meet, and all to please
you, who yet profess to love them ?

D I D

DID not Christ impute it to want of a rational and well-govern'd Love, that his Disciples afflicted themselves, and griev'd at his going away from this Earth. Consider, if the same Defect will not be found in you, if you do not rejoyce in Spirit, at the Thoughts of a Pastor dear to you, and dear to God, being remov'd to his heavenly Father's House.

LET me ask you, if I need to do it, Did you not love him? If so; and if Christ's Words be true, you ought to rejoyce at the Removal of him, of whom you have very little Reason to doubt, or any other, That he is gone to a State of Happiness and Joy. — I am not calling you to forget or slight One that hath been faithful to you; to consider him as now in the Grave, and there to leave him: No, I am calling you to remember him after the most friendly manner, to go after his Soul to Heaven, to consider its Joys there, to abide with it in your Thoughts as much as you please till you arrive there with it. I am calling you to remember your Pastor heroically, Christianly, exaltedly, joyously, charitably, without murmuring at your own Loss. I am even calling you to keep God the Father, and him company, and to hold Communion with both, by Love and Desire of Union with them. I am calling you to think how he is treated in the higher World; to consider how God loveth him and rewardeth him; how *Abraham, Isaac, &c.* welcome him to sit down with them in the Kingdom of Light and Love. I am calling you to go after him in your Thoughts, and see him, where he is better treated, than he was here on Earth: Though saying this, I do not reflect upon you for any Diskindness, or the least Neglect towards him. But alas! what is the greatest Kindness of Men that are evil, when compar'd with the everlasting Kind-

ness of the GOD of Love? What are all your Endearments to those of *Abraham's Bosom*? What are all your Ministrations and Services to be reckon'd of, which you have shew'd, or could shew, if compar'd with those of Angels and glorify'd Saints, which they shew one to another, in the Land and Kingdom of Love?

I DARE say, I exhort you no otherwise to shew your Love, than he himself would do, could he come again from the World he is call'd to, to speak to you. Were this allow'd, I dare say, he would tell you, He hath found a Father truly Good, Generous and Kind, beyond all that he could declare to you of Him, while cloath'd with Mortality: That tho' he lov'd you, and you him, yet he would not choose to leave his present Mansion, to come again amongst you, to be tempted, tried, contract Sin, and labour with Weariness and Painfulness. We read of one *Tarasius* *, who sorrowing immoderately for his Daughter that was dead, his Brother *Photius* writ to him after this manner: " Suppose, saith he, " thy Daughter should appear to thee, and taking thee by the Hand, should kiss it, with a chearful and smiling Countenance, saying, My Father, why dost thou afflict thyself in this manner? Why dost thou bemoan me, as if I was gone to an evil State? My Lot is fallen to me in Paradise; a Place most sweet to behold, and far sweeter to enjoy; but the Experiment exceeds all Belief. Into this the crooked Serpent cannot wind himself, as he did into that of our Forefathers. There is none amongst us, but whose Minds are impregnable, and

C

" cannot

* Vid. Epist. 235, Photii. I have given you the Translation of this Part of it, in the Words of an eminent Divine, Dr. Patrick in his Writings to Christianity, p. 2.

“ cannot be overcome by any Artifice ; nor can we
 “ desire to be gratify’d with any greater Good. We
 “ are all of us Wise with the Divine Wisdom. Our
 “ whole Life is a continual magnificent Festival in the
 “ Enjoyment of infinite and unspeakable good Things.
 “ Being splendidly cloath’d, we see God in a splendid
 “ manner, (as far as Man can see Him) and are ra-
 “ vished with his inexplicable Beauty. — Now while
 “ I converse with thee, a most mighty Love to these
 “ Things draws me away, and suffers me not to ex-
 “ plain the least Part of them. Thou, and my Mo-
 “ ther, shall one Day come hither, and then confess,
 “ I have said very little of these great good Things.
 “ Suppose, saith *Photius*, thy Daughter should after the
 “ like manner speak to thee, wouldst thou not be
 “ ashamed to continue thy Lamentations? And if up-
 “ on a Child’s saying these Things, we should grow
 “ better content, &c. shall we not when our Com-
 “ mon Creator and Lord crieth, Eye hath not seen,
 “ nor Ear heard, neither have enter’d into the Heart
 “ of Man, the Things which God hath prepar’d
 “ for them that love Him? Ah! we have Reason
 enough, if we believe any thing of the Scripture De-
 scriptions of Heaven and its Joys ; any thing of our
 heavenly Father’s House and its Entertainments, to
 conclude, That those gone thither, would (if they
 were allow’d to come back and converse with us) tell
 us, That if we lov’d them rationally and wisely, we
 would rejoyce at the Thoughts of that blessed Estate
 they are enter’d upon, and prepare to follow them thi-
 ther ; not wish them back again with us.

Now from this Text and the Doctrine deliver’d from it, we may see,

I, T H A T

I. THAT it is the Lot of the Flocks of Christ, their ordinary Lot, to be depriv'd of their Pastors. Jesus Christ's own little Flock experienc'd this Treatment, and it was not dealt with singularly and out of the common Way: All the Flocks and Churches of Christ, that succeeded them, and have been gather'd out of the World since, have had dying Pastors to speak to them, and have been made up of dying People themselves. Truly, you of this Congregation, see Evidences of the Truth of this. You have three Families now amongst you, the Heads of which were your Pastors, and died in the Service and Work of the LORD towards your Souls. You have parted with eloquent, zealous and industrious Guides. Many of you have liv'd under their Ministrations, and over-liv'd their Persons. Think now what Improvement you have made, and what Good there is done upon your Souls, by these Planters and Waterers. Examine, How ready you are to follow them, when the same Call is sent to remove you. You have parted with all of them under the most comfortable Hopes of their *going to the Father*: I pray GOD for you, and pray you for yourselves, That you may not be lost and eternally separated from such Friends and Guides.

II. WE may see, That it sheweth Love, to sorrow at the departing of a faithful Pastor, because of the Loss we sustain thereby: But it sheweth more exalted and rational Love to turn our Passions into another Strain, and to rejoyce in his Gain and Happiness: *If you loved me, ye, &c.*

IF you in particular, find this hard to do, compare your State and Circumstances with those of Christ's Disciples, at this Time, and see if you may not with

as little Difficulty receive Christ's Word, as they could. Your Loss is great; but theirs was greater. Your Loss is shocking, but theirs was more so: Your Pastor went abroad, and trusted to come back again, to see you, and dwell with you, and labour among you, as formerly, if the LORD would; but he was prevented: GOD would have him come home to Himself, and not return to you. GOD took him away suddenly, 'tis true; but yet by a natural Death and Distemper; whereas these Disciples Pastor, and their and our Common Lord, was to be cut off by the Violence and Persecution of his Enemies. Again, The Times were as bad, and as dangerous to the Church of GOD, in these Apostles Days, as they are now, and more so. The Gospel-Church had more Enemies, in proportion to its Extent, and was in a poorer Estate then, than it is in now. These Disciples had more need, in their own Apprehensions and Opinions, of a longer Abode of their Pastor with them, than you have. Their Pastor was as dear to them, as yours could be to you, to be sure; and yet they must lose him; and Joy, at the same Time, was more their Duty, and would have been a truer Evidence of Love, than Sorrow and Tears. I might add much more, to shew you, that this Duty and Instance of Love towards departing, or departed Pastors, *viz.* Rejoycing that such are going, or gone to the Father, must be an easier Practice to you, than it could be to these Disciples.

It is true, this Ingredient of Sorrow, this Aggravation of your Loss you have felt in your Separation from all the Three Pastors you have parted with, you have not been present with them, when a leaving you, to hear their last Instructive *, Consolatory and Valedictory

† Et nunc me cum primis id male habet, quod morienti non adfuerim, & extrema verba quæ summæ pietatis fuisse non dubito, cum aliis exceperim vide Epist. Pet. Martyr ut supra.

could. dictionary Words, as Christ's Disciples were with their
 Pastor and LORD, through the suddenness, or thro'
 the violence of their Distempers and Death. But you
 may read the Works of Two of them; you may warm
 your Hearts at their Heavenly Fire, and beget new
 Relishes and Tasts of the Things of GOD in your own
 Spirits, by seeing the Workings of theirs, &c. You
 may remember the Work and Labour of Love, of all
 of them in the Ministry. And you may well conceive,
 what they would have said, and how they would have
 spoken in your hearing, and to you, had GOD per-
 mitted them this Liberty. They would no doubt have
 professed their Faith, declared their Hopes, and told
 you where they were a going, as our LORD did his
 Disciples. They would have recommended Religion
 to you, and their Doctrine which hath been agreea-
 ble to it; and beg'd of you, for your Good, and
 their Rewards sake, not to lose the Things which
 they had wrought. They would have Prayed for
 you, commended Unity, Peace and Order to you,
 and have committed your precious Souls to the
 keeping of GOD, and to the Care of Christ, the
 great Shepherd of the Sheep; who liveth for ever-
 more, hath the Residue of the Spirit, and can raise
 up other Pastors for you, to perfect what is lacking
 in your Faith.

3. To repeat it again, and give you Line upon
 Line, for your Comfort, Consolation and Composure
 of Spirit; You may see, whither Faithful Ministers,
 and Faithful People go, when they die, and take Com-
 fort at the Departure of both, even to the Father. One
 of the most careful and able of Relations, is a Father;
 One of the tenderest and kindest: And to such a Re-
 lation they are gone. Now, we are solicitous about
 a Child no longer, when we know, it is gone to its
 Father: We fear not its falling into Danger any longer,
 when

when we know it is gone to a good One : We afflict not ourselves about it, as wanting any Thing good for it. Well, this is the Case of all Faithful Christians, Ministers and People, thus they are disposed of, when they die. And it being thus with them, let us rejoice in their Lot. This way remember the State of this your last Pastor, and that of those that went before him from among you, who spoke unto you the same Word of Life ; whose Faith follow considering the End of their Conversation.

I'LL add one Word more ; If you love your departed Pastors, gone to the Father, need I tell you, you'll Comfort, and shew all Respect to their deprived Families, their Widows and Fatherless. These will be countenanced and assisted by you, as Occasion requireth, for their Sakes. But I give these hints only as a little Testimony of Love and Respect ; and leave you to the Aged and more Experienced *, to hear and receive Advice, in the Afternoon, *Job xxxii. 7. Days should speak, and Multitude of Years should teach Wisdom.*

* Dr. Williams.

F I N I S.

